

whole question of portraiture from living originals in. his novels.

To William' Jerdan.

[1827.]

I am very much surprised at Mr. Colburu's request. How my knowledge of the characters in *Vivian Grey* can be necessary to, or, indeed, in the slightest degree assist any one in understanding the work, is to me a most inexplicable mystery. Let it be taken for granted that the characters are purely ideal, and the whole affair is settled. If any collateral information be required in order to understand the work, either *Vivian Grey* is unworthy to be read, or, which is, of course, an impossible conclusion, the reader is not sagacious enough to penetrate its meaning.

Of course, I have no intention of denying that these volumes are, in a very great degree, founded on my own observation and experience. Possibly, in some instances, I may have very accurately depicted existing characters. But *Vivian Grey* is not given to the public as a gallery of portraits, nor have I any wish that it should be considered as such. It will give me great pleasure if the public recognize it as a faithful picture of human nature in general. Whether it be anything further, rests with the author and can only interest him. I cannot prevent surmises ; but I shall always take care that from me they shall receive neither denial nor confirmation.

In part of the former volumes, a number of names and characters were introduced which were evident portraits or caricatures. I can understand any reader of those pages being naturally desirous to comprehend their full meaning, and seeking auxiliary means to procure the desired knowledge ; but to comprehend the full meaning of the present volumes, the public has only to read them; and if there be anything obscure or unsatisfactory, it is the author's fault — he is a blunderer. All the notes and keys in the kingdom will not make him more intelligible.

The Author of
*V. G.*¹

As a matter of fact Disraeli's knowledge of the world of politics and society when he wrote the first part of *Vivian Grey* was far too slight for- genuine portraiture

¹ Jordan's *Autobiography*, IV., p. 78.